

Federal Reserve would be authorized to take a closer look at the operations of companies across the financial spectrum and ensure that their practices do not threaten overall financial stability. There are other good ideas, and Members of Congress should consider them. As they do, they must ensure that efforts to regulate Wall Street do not end up hampering our economy's ability to grow.

In the long run, Americans have good reason to be confident in our economic strength. Despite corrections in the marketplace and instances of abuse, democratic capitalism is the best system ever devised. It has unleashed the talents and the productivity and entrepreneurial spirit of our citizens. It has made this country the best place in the world to invest and do business, and it gives our economy the flexibility and resilience to absorb shocks, adjust, and bounce back.

Our economy is facing a moment of great challenge. But we've overcome tough

challenges before, and we will overcome this one. I know that Americans sometimes get discouraged by the tone in Washington and the seemingly endless partisan struggles. Yet history has shown that in times of real trial, elected officials rise to the occasion. And together, we will show the world once again what kind of country America is: a nation that tackles problems head on, where leaders come together to meet great tests, and where people of every background can work hard, develop their talents, and realize their dreams.

Thank you for listening. May God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:01 p.m. on the State Floor at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Sen. John McCain, Republican Presidential nominee; and Sen. Barack Obama, Democratic Presidential nominee. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Michel Sleiman of Lebanon September 25, 2008

*President Bush.* It is my honor to welcome the President of Lebanon here to the Oval Office. Mr. President, there are a lot of Lebanese Americans who are paying attention to this visit. They care deeply about their ancestors. They want Lebanon to be free and sovereign and independent, and so do I, and so do you.

I have watched very carefully your initial statements upon being sworn in as President, and it—your statement impressed me. And we're most impressed by the national dialogue that you're holding in attempt to seek reconciliation. The United States is proud to stand by your side. Our mission is your mission: a country that is strong and capable and a country where people can live in peace.

And so I welcome you. It's been a long time since the President of Lebanon has been in the Oval Office. And it has been my—it is my honor to host you for this occasion. So I welcome you, and I'm looking forward to our dialogue.

*President Sleiman.* Thank you. Well, I am delighted to be here visiting the White House and visiting with you, President Bush. I am here to thank you for all the efforts that you have undertaken in order to support Lebanon, particularly the military institutions of Lebanon.

We are also very proud of Lebanese Americans, who are around a million of them here, occupy very important position in the United States. And they work very

sincerely for their country here as well as for their original homeland.

Mr. President, we share with the United States many of the human values and many of the cultural values. We promote and we believe very strongly in democracy and the principles of democracy. We believe in the promotion of liberty, all liberties, as well as the protection of human rights.

Mr. President, we work against bigotry and those who try to promote it, and certainly, we work very hard to combat terror. There are so many things in common between the American people and the Lebanese people.

We are here also to reaffirm our right in having a prosperous Lebanon, a democratic Lebanon, a country that it is diverse in its nature and through its people, but that in itself is wealth—the wealth of the

power—and the power of the people of Lebanon. And that adds to the value of the Middle East and the Arab world and the entire world.

Mr. President, we are also here to reaffirm the need to liberate all Lebanese territories and also to make it very clear that the future of Palestinian refugees is in their homeland, not in Lebanon. Mr. President, we believe that this is in the interest of Lebanon as well as it's in the interest of the Palestinian people themselves.

Thank you very much.

*President Bush.* Yes, sir. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:45 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Sleiman spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

## Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority *September 25, 2008*

*President Bush.* Mr. President, welcome back. You and I have met a lot since I have been the President and you have been the President. And I appreciate your determination and your desire to have a Palestinian state, and I share that desire with you.

It's not easy. No doubt it must be frustrating at times for you, because it's hard work to get a state after all these years. But nevertheless, there is a firm determination on your part and on my part to give the Palestinians a place where there can be dignity and hope.

We are working hard with you on security matters. We're working hard with you on helping the international community help you get the economy going in the West Bank. And I welcome you back.

As you know, I've got 4 more months left in office, and I'm hopeful that the vi-

sion that you and I have worked on can come to pass. And my only pledge to you is that I'll continue to work hard to see that it can come to pass. And so I welcome you back, and I think it's safe for me to say, I welcome you back, my friend.

*President Abbas.* Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. President. I am delighted, as well as the members of my delegation, to come here again to Washington and meet with you. We've met together for numerous times. Mr. President, we know very well how important this issue is for you, and we will continue to work very hard together in order to realize your vision of two states living side by side.

There is no doubt that you have done a great deal, Mr. President, and you have exerted a great deal of efforts aiming at